

Breathing the Same Air

Category: Poems

written by Ronald Lands | April 15, 2016

Ronald Lands

His hand-carved pipes still lean
in their rack like a row of saxophones
and fill the room with memories
of black vinyl records, Glenn Miller's band
playing "Chattanooga Choo Choo,"
a kitchen match scratched
across the bottom of his shoe
and swirling clouds of tobacco smoke,
a tribute to the charred remains
of the man who still lives in smoke-filled
images of when we breathed the same air.

About the poet:

Ron Lands is a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a hematologist with University Cancer Specialists. He has published short stories, poems and essays in literary and medical journals. "I practiced hematology and oncology for many years near the community where I grew up, and was privileged to treat lifelong friends and a few relatives. Much of my writing is the precipitate of those experiences."

About the poem:

"My dad quit smoking more than forty years before he died, but I don't think he ever felt completely free of the habit. I'm not sure why he kept his pipes, or how they came to be mine. They now rest on the credenza in my study, a comforting reminder of when we breathed the same air."

Poetry editors:

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